AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for transferring a microplate having a plurality of wells arranged in a matrix of lengthwise and crosswise rows relative to stationary dispenser nozzles spaced at regular intervals in ~~the~~ a crosswise direction perpendicular to a lengthwise direction for dispensing a liquid matter into the wells, the number of the nozzles being smaller than the number of the wells in each crosswise row of the micro plate, the apparatus comprising:

a support plate on which the microplate is mounted;

a ~~means for transferring the support plate~~ carrier mounted on the apparatus for linear movement forward and backward in the lengthwise direction, the support plate mounted to the carrier for linear motion relative to the carrier in the crosswise direction ; and

~~a means for shifting~~ a cam surface mounted on the apparatus for forcible engagement with the support plate as the support plate moves in the lengthwise direction, the cam surface shaped to shift the support plate in the crosswise direction between a first position in which each of the odd or even wells in crosswise rows of the micro plate is aligned with correspondingly one of the nozzles in the lengthwise direction, respectively, and a second position in which each of the even or odd wells in crosswise rows of the micro plate is aligned with correspondingly one of the nozzles in the lengthwise direction, respectively.

2. (Cancelled)

BD 9/12/08 Ex. Amend

3. (Currently Amended) An apparatus of claim 1 ~~or 2, wherein the shifting means comprises~~ further comprising:

one or more guide members on the carrier to guide the support plate in the crosswise direction;

one or more elastic members operative to keep the support plate in the first position and to urge the support plate in the second position back to the first position;

~~a means for moving the support plate in the first position toward the second position along the guide members and against the force of the elastic members after dispensing a liquid matter to all wells aligned with the nozzles in the lengthwise direction in the first position;~~

a ~~means for locking~~ lock mounted on the carrier to engage the support plate in the second position ~~when the support plate is being moved by the moving means~~; and

a ~~means for releasing the locking of the support plate in the second position after dispensing a liquid matter to all wells aligned with the nozzles in the lengthwise direction in the second position~~ release mounted on the apparatus to selectively disengage the lock.

4. (Currently Amended) An apparatus of claim 3, ~~wherein the moving means comprises~~ further comprising a roller rotatably attached to the support plate ~~and a diverting member for diverting the support plate from the lengthwise direction to the crosswise direction by contacting with the roller~~ to engage the cam surface.

5. (Currently Amended) An apparatus of claim 3, wherein the ~~locking means~~ lock comprises an opening or a recess formed in the support plate, a stopper which can be inserted into the opening when the support plate is in the second position, and a spring always urging the stopper to move toward the opening.

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus of claim 5, wherein the ~~releasing means~~ release comprises an engagement member which can pull out the stopper from the opening against the force of the spring.